

Sweet Hollow Road

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There are roads on Long Island that are much more than a line between two points. Some roads contain legends that travel with you on your journey. In Huntington, Long Island there is a small area south of Jericho Turnpike that holds more than its share of ghostly tales. Two roads in particular seem to harbor most of these ghostly wayfarers. Mount Misery Road and Sweet Hollow Road are less than a mile apart at their farthest points. Both are narrow winding roads pinned in on both sides by thick woods. It used to be that you could turn your headlights off and drive in complete darkness,

though due to accidents and land development lights have been installed and the woodland has diminished somewhat. It still gives off a very eerie feeling with the trees on all sides and overhead, a feeling where anything can happen... and does.

Odd stories have been circulating about this particular area since before the American Revolution. According to UFOlogist Bill Knell, at least two Native American tribes may have considered the area taboo. This is not how Mount Misery Road and Mount Misery proper got their names. Locals have called the area Mount Misery for centuries but you will never find it written that way on any map. It got its name because of its unfarmable land and the steep hills. Since the area was not conducive to farming it became a crossroads between farming communities and the difficult trek caused many a wagon wheel to snap.

To many travelers this was a miserable trip and hence the name. Since it became an area of high traffic, the Chichester family decided to build a small inn there called the Peace and Plenty Inn. Once the milling industry started up, the farmers had nowhere to go while they were waiting for the mill to finish, so the inn became a center of social life. The whereabouts of the Inn are uncertain but to this day there is a Chichester Road in that area.

In the mid 1700's a small mental asylum was built. Back in those days the best cure for the mentally ill was to shut them up away from other people so as not to upset the other members of society with their craziness. It suffices to say the treatment was not good and there are accounts of screams and moans having been heard from the asylum. The story behind the fire that shut down the asylum is the beginning to the strange legends. Supposedly one of the female patients was going through a bout of depression and managed to set her room on fire with herself inside. This burned down the entire hospital. It is said you can still see this patient at times with a white hospital gown and messy white hair wandering the roads. We believe this legend is tied to the other "Lady in White" legends that surround Mount Misery. She is many legends in one, merged by centuries of oral records and passed from generation to generation. Some say she was a patient of the hospital. Others claim she was a woman walking home from work who was killed by a car in the dark of night. She likes to jump in front of cars and some cars will even stall rather than run her over.

For anyone familiar with the Long Island Mary's Grave legends, you will be surprised to note that Mount Misery too has its Mary and its own haunted cemetery. This is also intertwined with the Lady in White tales. All over Long Island there are stories of a woman or child named Mary murdered in tortuous ways and buried but not at rest. Legends say she was walking home and was killed on the roadside and now she wanders these dark and lonely roads to protect other women from the same fate. Mary is also reported to be in white when she is sighted. Many drivers have noted seeing her both at the cemetery and along the roadside.

She is not the only hiker along this haunted road. If you drive under the overpass where the Northern State Parkway crosses Sweet Hollow Road, you might see many things. According to legend some teens hung themselves from the bridge and if you park by the bridge and flash the lights they will appear. Also, a child was once hit by a car near the bridge and you can see him

sitting in the road. Another woman, who is never seen, haunts the bridge. She was killed in a head on collision in the seventies and now protects other drivers from the same fate. The road is very narrow and winding at that point, so it is very easy to believe a collision could occur. If you park under the bridge and put your car in neutral, she will push you back to safety, supposedly uphill. But that's not the most horrifying thing that might happen to you along this road!

If a policeman pulls you over, check the back of his head. If he has no skull back there, you have just met one of Mount Misery's ghosts. If you see a man walking along the road in the rain but when you stop to pick him up, he is gone, do not be alarmed. He may be a ghost. Some witnesses have reported seeing a disheveled man walking with a basket of heads, supposedly from people who mysteriously disappeared in the area.

Spectral humans are not the only spooks to look out for at Mount Misery, though. According to some tales there is a creature called a Hell Hound also. It lurks in the trees by the road and will stare at you with fiery red eyes. Its fur is black as night and some believe seeing the hound is an omen of imminent death.

We had our own weird experience while traveling down Sweet Hollow road once late at night. We noticed there was red paint on all of the yellow road signs reading, "Help Me." Upon returning with cameras a few days later, the mysterious writing had vanished. Maybe road cleaners took it off, or maybe it was never even physically there. Just one more odd Mount Misery occurrence.

Tales about the Mount Misery area have been passed on from person to person for over 100 years, so it stands to reason that the tales will change and grow. Do demonic dogs wander the same roads as the eerie Lady in White? Only the road itself knows for sure, but whether you are a believer in the legends or not, it is indisputable that there are more oddities located in this small neighborhood than any other in Long Island. -John and Laura

The Burning Asylum of Mount Misery

I live on Long Island, and not far from where I live is Mount Misery Road. It is located in the town of Huntington between Plainview and Woodbury. The road has no street sign. The name is painted in white on a tree at the start of the road.

The legend is that there was once a mental hospital there and a mental patient started a fire in her room, killing herself and destroying the hospital. Ten years later the hospital was rebuilt, but only a few months later another fire broke out. Fearing another event, the town decided not to rebuild again and just used the land for housing. There are still some houses there hidden deep in the woods, but very few.

Mainly there are just thick woods on both sides of the road. The legend is that if you find the right trail that will take you to the spot where the main hospital once was, you will see burning ghosts running and screaming. Another part to the legend is that Mount Misery road is haunted by the mental patient who started the original fire there. She can be seen at certain times along the road. I've heard that she wears a hospital robe and has wild white hair. I've also heard that she slowly dances along the side of the road. I've been there several times and have seen nothing.

It is a dark road surrounded by woods and just looks creepy. The one strange thing that I noticed is that at the end of the road, there is a big tree stump lying across the road. It's meant to block off anyone from going into the woods beyond that point. There is a sign saying no one is allowed past that point. I wonder what could be in those woods beyond. Maybe it's the area where the ghosts can be seen. Who knows? -Anonymous

Sally Sits Up on Mt. Misery Road

I grew up on Long Island and though it is also an older part of country (settled during Dutch times) many of the legends have been lost over time. However there is one legend that I heard of when I was growing up and which was the story of Mt. Misery

Road located in Huntington. The road starts in an affluent residential section and then continues into a large county park and ends. The road is said to be haunted and hostile to unwelcome visitors.

Another oddity on the road is the ghost of Sally, which was an unfortunate individual who was killed when her car hit a tree. The story is that when the headlights of your car flash past this tree you see a shadow sit up. Some say that it is a trick of car's lights, some say that it is Sally. There are other stories of strange figures that walk along the side of the road and mysterious cars that chase you out of the area.

Mt. Misery Road was a favorite road to travel as high school student and each time someone traveled along it there was always a new story to tell. Perhaps if you ever find yourself in the Huntington area at night, you too might travel along it and have a new story to add to the tale. -Arthur Criscione